

461st Transportation Company (Amphibian)

World War II

It was constituted on 2 June 1943 as the 461st Amphibian Truck Company (Transportation Corps) and it was activated, under the command of CPT Stephen McGregor, on 6 July 1943 at Charleston Port of Embarkation, South Carolina. The company participated in amphibious training at the amphibious training center, Moultrieville, South Carolina, from July to November 1943. From there it proceeded to the New York Port of Embarkation and on New Years Day 1944, it sailed for England on the *Queen Elizabeth*. It was assigned to the 6th Engineer Special Brigade where it conducted more amphibious training. It was assigned to the 280th Quartermaster Battalion for administration but the 149th Engineer Combat Battalion for operations.

It participated in the landing at Omaha Beach, Normandy. It landed at Vierville-Sur-Mer, Cakvadi, France, on D-Day, 6 June 1944. The company was assigned the task of evacuated wounded to the hospital ship during the battle and had three men killed to include their commanding officer, Captain Stephan McGregor, one wounded and nine missing in action. Tech Sgt Amos C. Millwood successfully landed his DUKW on the beach in the face of enemy fire to deliver ammunition to the men on the beach and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The distinguished Unit Citation was awarded to 117 members of the company who were attached to the 147th Engineer Combat Battalion on 6 June 1944. The company did not participate in the action as a company and was not awarded the citation.

On 7 June it was assigned to the 147th Engineer Combat Battalion for operations until 29 October when it was assigned to the 5th Engineer Special Brigade. It performed ship-to-shore operations at Normandy until 7 December.

On 7 December, the company moved under orders of the Normandy Base Section by convoy through Paris and arrived on 10 December 1944, at Houtain-St. Simeon, Belgium. There it was attached to Ninth US Army for administration and 1143rd Engineer Combat Group for operations. Then from 29 December 1944 to 10 January 1945 in Vise, Belgium, where it participated in the Ardennes Campaign, better known as the Battle of the Bulge. The company was attached to the 551st Engineer Heavy Pontoon Battalion from 28 December 1944 to 8 January 1945 and was commended for action under fire during the Rhine River crossing. 43 enlisted men of the company were attached to Headquarters Company, 1143rd Engineer Combat Group for security of Maastricht, Holland. It went back to Houtain-St. Simeon on 10 January and remained until 10 February. From there it went to Aachen, Germany and served until 7 March.

The 461st Amphibious Truck Company earned campaign streamers for Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland and Central Europe. It was also awarded the streamer, French Croix de Guerre with Palm, embroidered Normandy Beaches and another embroidered with Normandy.

After the war, the company was sent to Camp Gordon, Johnston, Florida, in August 1945. There it was redesignated as the 461st Transportation Corps Amphibian Truck Company on 5 December 1945. In February 1946, it was transferred to Fort Eustis, Virginia, then to Norfolk

Army Base in August. It remained there until January 1947 when it moved to nearby Fort Story. It participated in summer training of cadets at West Point from 1947 to 1950. LTG Maurice M. Mathenet, French Military Attache to the US presented the company its Croix de Guerres at West Point, New York in 1947. It was redesignated as the 461st Transportation Amphibious Truck Company on 7 July 1947 and allotted to the Regular Army on 1 August 1951.

Cold War

In 1949, the Soviet Union tested its first nuclear bomb and the Communist Chinese drove the Nationalist Chinese off of the mainland onto the island of Formosa. The threat of world communism became real and heralded the Cold War where communist and democratic nations poised on the brink of war. Center to the threat was the defense of Europe against Soviet aggression. The free European nations and the United States for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. The boundary between East and West Germany represented the front line and France was the communication zone (COMZ) where an intricate supply system had grown. For fear that the Soviets would use their nuclear capability to destroy the deep draft ports in Northern France, the NATO planners expected to have to conduct a Normandy style amphibious resupply mission. The US Army Transportation Corps began to focus on its ability to conduct supply over the beach operations. The terminology changed to logistics-over-the-shore (LOTS) operations when soldiers realized that they had originally been working on the SOB. The Cold War saw significant development in LOTS capability.

There was a similar fear of attack by Soviet long-range bombers. The shortest distance for was across the Arctic Circle. The US Air Force established a line of Distant Early Warning (DEW) stations from Thule, Greenland, to the tip of Alaska in 1952. In spring of 1951, landing craft were attached to the 373rd Transportation Major Port (TMP) to Thule, Greenland as part of Operation BLUEJAY. In February 1952, the 373rd TMP conducted Operation Support of North Atlantic Construction (SUNAC) 52. LCMs and LCUs discharged cargo and equipment for the construction of the radar stations along the DEW Line. In the summer of 1952, the 461st Amphibious Truck Company participated in the SUNEK Operation at Goose Bay, Labrador.

On 5 December 1952 it was redesignated as the 461st Transportation Company (Amphibious Truck). In June 1953, the company took over the RSI training at Fort Story. This allowed for stability. During this period the company performed outstandingly in all sports. It adopted the nickname, "Barracudas," and the motto, "It Never Gets Too Tough For Us," in August 1953.

The 461st Amphibious Truck Company was attached to the 14th Transportation Battalion when it was activated at Fort Story, Virginia, on 25 May 1956. It then became a deployable unit.

The 329th Heavy Boat, 1097th and 1098th Medium Boat Companies, 461st Amphibious Truck Company and the 554th BARC Platoon supported Operation JAMLEX from 25 October to 7 November 1960. They operated under the command of the 6th Transportation Battalion. The operation tested the "through the beach" concept to support the 1,500 man Marine landing team at Camp Lejuene, North Carolina. The operation was conducted in four phases with the DUKWs and landing craft discharging troops, tanks, artillery and supplies on the beach to establish a foothold. The BARCs established a ferry across the inland waterway. The second phase

concentrated on the logistical support of combat forces even utilizing helicopters for emergency resupply and medical evacuation. During the second phase the amphibians and landing craft moved troops and supplies across the New River. During phase four helicopters lifted a battalion of Marines to Camp Davis and Bogue Field for further maneuvers.

The DUKW was built out of the urgency for a truck that could swim. However, it handled like a truck in the water. The COT, MG Paul Yount, directed the US Army Research Command (USATRECOM) in 1956 to build a boat with the ability to drive on land. The Transportation Corps designed Lighter Amphibious Resupply Cargo (LARC) vehicles with a 5, 15 and 60-ton capacities. The 60-ton capacity LARC was also designed as a Barge Amphibious Resupply Cargo (BARC) vehicle. The prototype of the 5-ton LARC V was built in July 1959 with final design produced in 1963. Besson, who was COT from 1958 to 1962, was instrumental in the purchase of them. They LARC V did not handle the way it was expected so most were given to Army Reserve companies. The first active duty companies to receive them were the 165th, 305th, 344th, 458th and 461st Transportation Companies. The 461st was reorganized and redesignated as a Lighter Amphibious Company on 20 September 1963. The 461st LARC had the 148th Transportation Detachment (Amphibious Maintenance) (Direct Support) and the 503rd Transportation Detachment (BARC) attached to it for administrative support. It was attached to the 10th Transportation Battalion and had responsibility for lighterage support for amphibious or logistical operations tests (AMLOTS) conducted by the battalion.

Vietnam War

The increase in guerrilla activity and the ineptness of South Vietnamese Army leadership to deal with it, caused General William C. Westmoreland, Commander of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), to seek US involvement in the ground war. In the summer of 1965, the US Army assumed a major role in fighting the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army guerrillas. The First Logistics Command needed transportation units to bring in the combat brigades and divisions.

The 461st LARC did not deploy to Vietnam but supported other deploying units. When the 344th LARC Company deployed to Vietnam in 1965, the 461st LARC began to lose qualified personnel. By January 1966, the company strength dropped to 42% and could no longer perform its Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) mission. It was able to support all units that deployed overseas to Vietnam though. The 458th LARC deployed to Vietnam in October 1966. The 461st LARC Company remained at Fort Story as part of the 10th Transportation Battalion (Terminal) until that battalion deployed to Vietnam in March 1966, then the company was assigned to the 71st Transportation Battalion (Terminal) until that battalion headquarters deployed to Vietnam in July 1966. The 461st LARC was then assigned to the US Army Support Element Fort Story until the 79th Transportation Battalion (Terminal) arrived in October 1967. The 461st LARC inactivated on 24 February 1973.